



Kluane Lake School Review Report

Kluane Lake School
September 2010

School Principal:

Date of Review Report: October 18, 2010

School Review Team:

Penny Prysruk: School Superintendent

Christie Whitley: Assistant Deputy Minister

Meetings with the School included:

Meeting with the principal: September 22, 2010

Meeting with the School Council: September 22, 2010

Meeting with students: September 22, 2010

School Context

Kluane Lake School is a K – 8 school with seven students, 2 at the K/4 level, 3 in grade 2, 1 in grade 4 and 1 in grade 6. The school is located in Destruction Bay on Kluane Lake. It is a two- room school with additional facilities for gym and library area and a stage for performing arts. All the children are bussed in from Burwash Landing, which is 15 kilometers from the school. The school has experienced significant declining enrolments over the past few years.

Most of the students are from the Kluane First Nation. Southern Tutchone is the language taught at the school by the Native Language Instructor. The Kluane First Nation is currently going through a governance transition and a restructuring. There will also be a School Council election within the next month, which could result in transitions within this group as well.

A number of the parents of the Kluane Lake School attended the school themselves. The priority for the current School Council is that all students have an understanding of their culture and heritage, become good citizens and have the capacity to integrate into the larger education system at any point in their education. They are very proud of the number of successful citizens who have attended Kluane Lake School. They have expectations that their children will develop an understanding of their community and culture while also developing the skills. The school council and parents expect that their children are engaged in the learning process using strategies that build on the talents, interests, and needs of each individual child. The principal functions as both teacher and administrator and has been at the school for 5 years.

School Norms and Culture

Characteristics: Continuously improving schools are socially and culturally inclusive with high expectations for each learner. A focus on continuous improvement is evident.

Observations of the Team:

- The atmosphere in the school is relaxed and the culture reflects mutual caring and respect, almost like a family.
- Students are encouraged to:
 - Express their individualism,
 - Share their work,
 - Collaborate with each other and,
 - Encourage each other as learners.
- The principal/teacher's interest in developing a sense of social responsibility and honouring diversity is apparent in the school.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Strengthen the focus on continuous improvement in order to support each learner in doing his/her personal best
- Ensure that the conditions for learning are in place so each student can build on his or her individual strengths, take on new challenges in the learning process, and reach high standards.

School and Community

Characteristics: In continuously improving schools, there is a shared commitment to success for each learner. Relationships are developed and maintained to support students. Ongoing parent/community involvement is embedded in school culture. The school collaborates and communicates in multiple ways about the work to support student learning. Input and dialogue is actively sought and valued.

Observations of the Team:

- The school growth planning team includes School Council members, parents, and Kluane First Nations members. This group is enthusiastic about contributing to the school.
- The school is open to community and parent involvement.
 - The school welcomes input and dialogue with the community through surveys and informal relationships with community members.
- The school and community are concerned about:
 - The impact of residential schools on both the community and the children at the school. They share the desire of supporting students in understanding this part of their history while moving forward to be citizens of an increasingly stronger community

- The need to send their children to either Whitehorse or Haines Junction after grade 8, or move their whole family which creates instability in the community
- The lack of socialization with age group peers because of declining numbers at the school, a particular concern for older students

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Strengthen Elder and community participation in the school to:
 - Support locally developed curriculum and programming
 - Develop apprenticeships with community members or service learning projects for older students
- Explore with the Department and the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit:
 - Ways to support learners in the community from grade 9 to grade 12 in the future, which may include distance learning and virtual and other connections to courses at Haines Junction or in Whitehorse.
 - Strategies to address issues related to residential school.

School Organization

Characteristics: Continuously improving schools organize structures, actions, and interventions to ensure success for each learner. Work in the school is coherent and aligned to focus on improvement. Actions and interventions include effectively differentiating resources, time and professional development to get results. The Department supports the school and makes connections across the Territory to build capacity.

Observations of the Team:

- The school has an abundance of learning materials, equipment, and resources and the access to technology is excellent with almost one computer for each student.
- The amount of space inside the school and the surrounding outdoor environment, lend themselves to focusing on experiential, active and individualized learning opportunities for the students.
- Community members are interested in supporting the work of the school to improve student outcomes through after hours programming.
- Some of the materials, resources and organizational structures at the school need to be reviewed and revised or eliminated in the light of declining enrolment and the need to focus on individual students.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Work with Department staff to:
 - Organize classroom structures and systems to better facilitate individualized learning
 - Get rid of outdated and redundant materials and equipment
 - Develop a design for efficient storage and display of materials to ensure easy teacher and student access.
- Promote independence, a sense of self-efficacy and improved outcomes for each student by:

- Making routines and schedules consistent and predictable
- Strengthening the focus on differentiating instructional strategies and developing a student learning plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each learner
- Expanding the use of technology as part of differentiating instruction for individual students
- Assisting the community in the development of after school programs

School Processes and Progress

Characteristics: Improving schools improve outcomes for students. They use evidence to guide decisions and actions and have processes in place to collectively monitor progress and make adjustments in key areas of their work. They demonstrate improvement over time – for individual students, groups of students, and the school.

Observations of the Team:

- The community and the principal understand strengths of the students and are excited about seeing students grow in their areas of interest.
- Strategies to assess the incremental progress of individual students are in the early stages of development
- The school growth plan identifies writing and social responsibility as areas identified for improvement. Although these areas are very important, the plan does not reflect the focus on the individual student that is the basis of the work at Kluane Lake School.

Recommendations for moving forward:

- Work with Department consultants to:
 - Develop student assessment profiles to guide individual student learning plans or Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
 - Use the profiles to guide decisions about actions and strategies to use in support each student
 - Monitor individual progress over time and adjust strategies to improve results
- Help each student set personal goals, assess their own progress, and celebrate successes
- Work with the Department and the School Council to develop a new school growth plan that is more reflective of the focus on individual students.

Conclusions:

The staff, School Council, and community are proud of the students at Kluane Lake and are united in their desire for the continued success of the school and the local community. The positive approach with students is a strength. The Department will

support the school in focusing on organizing the school to address individual student needs, developing individual student assessment profiles and implementing strategies to support learning that include utilizing the knowledge and skills in the community over the next year. Monitoring progress and adjusting strategies on an ongoing basis will help to ensure that Kluane students have the skills needed to be successful.

Practices to share:

The focus on individual students and the strength-based approach to each child, supported by staff and community.